



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lowell National  
Historical Park

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## Lowell National Historical Park News Release

August 6, 2003

For Immediate Release

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### 2003 CANAL HERITAGE DAYS, OCTOBER 10-13, 2003

Join us as we celebrate over 200 years of canal history in the Merrimack Valley and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of Lowell National Historical Park. Over the Columbus Day Weekend you can participate in special presentations, hands-on activities, tours, and exhibits all commemorating America's canal heritage.

The weekend of events begins with an evening reception at the American Textile History Museum and keynote address on Friday, October 10. Nolan Jones, President of the Middlesex Canal Association and Tom Raphael, Chairman of the Middlesex Canal Commission will discuss the historical significance of the Old Middlesex Canal. Opening in 1803, as one of the first inter-regional transportation systems in the United States stretching from Boston to Lowell, the canal left a lasting impression that continues to this day. The restoration, preservation, and revitalization efforts underway, including the establishment of the Middlesex Canal Museum in Billerica, MA will be discussed as well as future plans for the canal. All are invited to attend free of charge.

On Saturday, October 11, Lowell National Historical Park, Tsongas Industrial History Center, and American Textile History Museum will host a variety of free programs and activities for all ages. Writer, author of *The Valley and Its Peoples*, and regional historian Paul Hudon, Ph. D. will discuss the varied uses of the Merrimack River. Lowell National Historical Park's Chief of Maintenance Ted Davis will discuss the maintenance and repair of Lowell's historic power canals, and Chief Ranger Dave Redding will present his ever-popular program "Lowell Underground" looking at the interesting features that survive from Lowell's great age of hydropower. American Canal Society President David Barber will speak on canal restoration in England and the United States. National Canal Museum Historian Lance Metz will speak on



other canal and waterpower cities such as Paterson, NJ, Augusta, GA, Chicago, IL, and Montreal, Canada. A scavenger hunt and hands-on activities for families will be offered at the American Textile History Museum and Tsongas Industrial History Center. Rose Galliard Northwest Morris Dance will also present outdoor performances of traditional dance originating in the cotton mill towns of northwest England.

The Middlesex Canal Museum Visitor Center in Billerica will host activities on Sunday, October 12. Storytelling, lectures by Middlesex Canal Museum and Commission staff, boat rides on the Concord River and family activities will be offered free of charge throughout the day. Transportation planner and volunteer guide Bill Kuttner will offer a ten-mile guided bike tour of the remnants of the Middlesex Canal beginning at Lowell National Historical Park Visitor Center and finishing at the museum and historic Mill Village in North Billerica.

On Monday, October 13, American Canal Society Vice-President Bill Gerber will lead a car tour of the canals of the Merrimack River.

Lowell National Historical Park will offer historic trolley rides and canal boat tours throughout the weekend including Monday, October 13. Regular fees apply for canal boat tours. The Boott Cotton Mills Museum, Mill Girls and Immigrant Exhibit, American Textile History Museum, and Middlesex Canal Museum Visitor Center in Billerica will be open during normal operating hours and all regular admission fees apply.

For more information and a full schedule of events, contact Lowell National Historical Park at (978) 970-5000. For those with hearing impairment, call TDD at (978) 970-5002. Visit the Park's web site at [www.nps.gov/lowe](http://www.nps.gov/lowe).